Fall 1987

The Library Associates [v. 7, no. 3]

Paula Leach Pope

University of Kentucky, p pope@uky.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/kentucky-review

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Right click to open a feedback form in a new tab to let us know how this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/kentucky-review/vol7/iss3/8

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Kentucky Libraries at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Kentucky Review by an authorized editor of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.
Dedication of the Patterson Room

On Thursday, 21 May 1987 the study room in the Department of Special Collections was named in honor of Mrs. Mary Marvin Breckinridge Patterson of Washington, D.C. Mr. Paul A. Willis introduced University of Kentucky Pres. Otis A. Singletary, who assisted in unveiling a portrait of Mrs. Patterson and shared with the audience the inscription which accompanied it:

MARY MARVIN BRECKINRIDGE PATTERSON
A broadcaster, photographer, writer, and devoted volunteer for the Frontier Nursing Service in Leslie County, Kentucky, Mrs. Patterson is a daughter of the notable Kentucky Breckinridge family. The 1930 silent documentary she filmed and produced for the FNS, The Forgotten Frontier, was only the beginning of her life-long involvement with that organization, including fifteen years as national chairman. Her work as a free-lance photographer and writer has been widely published and nationally recognized. In 1939-40 she served as a broadcaster reporting for CBS from Europe. Her marriage to the late Jefferson Patterson, a career foreign service officer and ambassador, led the couple to posts around the world. But Mrs. Patterson has always held a special fondness for her family and her work in Kentucky. In recognition of those endeavors and for her support of the University of Kentucky Libraries, this room is named in her honor.

Remarks followed from two individuals who have known Mrs. Patterson over a period of many years, Mrs. John Farr Simmons of Washington, D.C. and Miss Kate Ireland, National Chairman of the Frontier Nursing Service, of Wendover, Kentucky.
REMARKS OF MRS. JOHN FARR SIMMONS

Today I have the great pleasure of being at the University of Kentucky and having the wonderful opportunity of speaking about the accomplishments of a dear friend whom I have known for over fifty years. We first met in Washington in the 1930s after graduation from college and in spite of separations on four continents during our diplomatic lives we are again living in the same city.

Mrs. Patterson’s life is so productive that it would be impossible to give more than a brief outline of her activities. Then I would like to cite some of those qualities that I think are making her life so influential.

A graduate of Vassar in 1927 and a postgraduate student at the Clarence White School of Photography in New York, Mrs. Patterson also studied at the University of Berlin, the Catholic University of Lima, and the American University of Cairo. This educational background is in part responsible for her interest in world affairs and her familiarity with languages: French, Spanish, German, and Arabic. It is an interesting question—which came first, foreign study because of an interest in world culture, or the acquisition of the interest because of the foreign study? Whichever it was, it has continued and expresses itself in her activities: Trusteeship of Meridian House International and until recently a Director of the International Student House. Mrs. Patterson has also received honorary doctorates from Bowdoin College and Georgetown University.

Soon after Vassar, Mrs. Patterson did postgraduate work in photography because, she said, “I got hooked on photography when I was eight or nine. Someone gave me a vest pocket Kodak, and I rode around all day on the top of a double decker bus in New York snapping pictures of landmarks. I still have those pictures.” In 1932 Mrs. Patterson traveled with friends on the Phelps-Stokes Foundation from Cape Town to Cairo taking photos all the way which were later used as illustrations in a book published with the help of the Smithsonian Institution called Olivia’s African Diary: Cape Town to Cairo, 1932. (Prior to that trip, in 1930, a cousin interested her in the Frontier Nursing Service, but I will leave that story to Miss Ireland. Mrs. Patterson had also become the first licensed woman air pilot in Maine, but that only gave contrast to being a courier on horse back!) It was
Mr. Scott D. Breckinridge, President of the Library Associates; Dr. Art Gallaher, Jr., Chancellor of the Lexington Campus; Mrs. Marvin Breckinridge Patterson; and Mr. Paul A. Willis, Director of Libraries, following the dedication of the Patterson Room in King Library—North.

this training in photojournalism that led to the great adventure in the Europe of the late 1930s. Mrs. Patterson had arranged with several magazines to cover stories ranging from a Nazi rally in Germany to the Lucerne Music Festival. Neither took place. The Germans marched into Poland, and music festivals no longer seemed important.

Because Mrs. Patterson had known the famous Edward R. Murrow in the National Student Federation, she checked in with him in London, and he immediately hired her to broadcast for CBS’s World News Roundup. This position took her through six countries of war-torn Europe. There were very few women broadcasters at the time. People thought women’s voices were too high, so Ed Murrow reminded her to keep hers low. As traveling in Europe was dangerous, she made sure that her affairs were in order before leaving for Holland and left some rings she wanted a niece to have, in case she did not come back, with Mrs. Murrow.
In Berlin, on assignment in 1940, Mrs. Patterson met an acquaintance from Washington, Jefferson Patterson, a career Foreign Service officer. They married in Berlin. Later they went to posts in South America, the Middle East, and ultimately to Uruguay, where Mr. Patterson served as ambassador. In view of today’s mores, it is interesting to note that investigative reporting and photography by a wife were not well viewed by the authorities. “Unseemly,” they said. So she gave up her work. Mrs. Patterson is still a member of the Edward R. Murrow Center at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

She never considered herself just a hostess at diplomatic posts. In Uruguay she supervised the preparation of a booklet designed to help new arrivals learn about the country and profit from life there. In Egypt she gave a speech in colloquial Arabic over the radio on July Fourth. Classical Arabic was the accepted diplomatic language, but the people who shared a radio in a café only knew colloquial Arabic. Mrs. Patterson, also, with her wonderful organizational sense, did a study on the working relationship between the Embassy (the residence of the Ambassador) and the Chancery (the office). Mrs. Patterson may not have been “only a hostess,” but both in the United States and abroad she always has perfect arrangements and that indefinable grace of combining people of diverse backgrounds so that they are interesting to each other.

It would be impossible to list the innumerable benefactions of Mrs. Patterson, but two are particularly notable: the donation of the beautiful Breckinridge property in Maine to Bowdoin College as the Breckinridge Public Affairs Center, and the donation of five-hundred-acre Point Farm in Maryland to the State of Maryland for the Jefferson Patterson Historical Park and Museum. This was the largest gift ever received by the State of Maryland and is a wonderful area of archaeological interest—twelve thousand years of human occupation, and seventy known archaeological sites—open to all the people. Mrs. Patterson has received preservation awards in Maine, Ohio, and Kentucky; in Maryland, she received the Calvert Prize for Conservation in 1984 and the Citizen of the Year award in 1983.

In looking over the many benefactions and board memberships of Mrs. Patterson there are, in addition to a general desire for the betterment of society, four definite areas of interest which have continued throughout her life: world affairs; family history in
Kentucky, Ohio and Maine; museums and their administration; and preservation of land and history. This generosity has always been accompanied by deep and sustained personal involvement and commitment of time.

In summary, I believe that Mrs. Patterson's life is governed by a sense of noblesse oblige. That is to say that as she has been the recipient of many advantages in life she feels obligated to make a contribution of her own talents, energy, and resources. This has required an organized life and mind, a commitment to doing the best possible job, and the use of creative thinking. It has all been done with great personal loyalty to family and friends and thoughtfulness to all associates. I believe, and I hope that you will agree with me, that Mrs. Patterson is truly a great lady.

REMARKS OF MISS KATE IRELAND

One would wonder how much more this remarkable woman could accomplish in a lifetime. But what I have to relate is unique, adventuresome, and typical of Marvin. I have been privileged to know Marvin personally for over twenty-seven years, and I also have access to another thirty-two years of Marvin Breckinridge Patterson history in the Frontier Nursing Service correspondence files at Wendover, Kentucky and through the pages of the FNS's Quarterly Bulletin. Hence my knowledge of her life breaks into Marvin the Courier, Marvin the film-maker, Marvin the Trustee, Marvin the National Chairman, Marvin the Washington Committee Member, and, most important to me, Marvin my mentor and friend.

Marvin Breckinridge Patterson has devoted a goodly portion of her life, her love, and her energy to promoting the Frontier Nursing Service in a myriad of ways, and this has been true for nearly three generations. When Mary Breckinridge founded the Frontier Nursing Service, she brought with her many ideas she had gotten from her European experiences in health care delivery. One of the best of these was organizing a courier, or volunteer, service for the Frontier Nursing Service. Marvin has the distinct honor of being in the first group of FNS Couriers who then, as today, were invaluable to the Service in so many ways. The most important job was tending to the horses, as these valuable animals provided the only transportation through the mountains in those early days. Additionally, the Couriers have always provided a link between the various FNS Outpost Nursing Centers and the hospital—hence
the name "Courier." Other duties in those days would include, most likely, watering the cows, nursing sick horses, attending the birthing of pigs, and very definitely of cows. In Marvin's case, she also frequently accompanied Mrs. Breckinridge on her rounds of the Nursing Centers. This, by the way, was on horseback, and it would take over a week to go to the six Centers. In the fall of 1928, Mrs. Breckinridge wrote the following in the FNS Quarterly Bulletin: "We couldn't have gotten through the summer without our volunteer transport service—Marvin Breckinridge, Anna Weld, Brooke Alexander, another cousin from Kent School, and Jim Parton, Brooke's friend." Mary Breckinridge wrote that "if we were a College of Heraldry we would give them Arms—A mule Rampant . . . Guests Couchant . . . On a field emblazoned with rising water, quicksand and mud!"

Marvin's next FNS role was as the film-maker. Mrs. Mary Breckinridge needed a black and white film to help her in raising money from her friends throughout the country to help continue the work of the FNS. She asked Marvin to return in 1930 to make a silent black and white film. At Mrs. Breckinridge's urging, Marvin studied cinematography, and then she came down to Eastern Kentucky from New York three times and rode over six hundred miles on horseback researching this project. She collected true stories from the FNS nurses, wrote the script, managed the camera and the lighting, and did the final editing for the film. Managing the camera meant that she would sometimes be knee-deep in water, cranking on her camera, which would be set on a tripod in the middle of a creek or river. In one scene, where the light fades in and out, Marvin remains apologetic, but she says she was so cold that she could barely make her hand move on the crank of the camera. The lighting was a special problem, for you must realize that there was little electricity in the Frontier Nursing Service territory in those days. For one of her scenes, which is inside a mountain cabin, she had to wait until the following summer when there was a gentleman re-roofing his cabin. When the roof was actually off was the time she arranged for the set to take pictures inside the cabin through the roof.

How could she have known so many years ago that more than half a century later her silent black and white film, The Forgotten Frontier, would still be the most poignant fund-raising tool for this organization? That it would have been shown hundreds of times and enjoyed by audiences ranging from powerful politicians and
corporate leaders to school children and senior citizens’ groups? Or that images she would capture on film would evolve into the single most important tool for communicating the essence of the Frontier Nursing Service to thousands of potential supporters, possible nurses, and volunteers? I am pleased to report that “The Forgotten Frontier” was re-edited and updated last summer by Marvin, and now she narrates the highlights of the various scenes—nighttime delivery in a cabin during winter, the first typhoid inoculation clinic, and even a shooting, in the truest mountain fashion, in the early 1930s. We have just finalized a distribution agreement so that this wonderful film can be enjoyed by a new generation of students, professionals, and friends of the Frontier Nursing Service throughout the United States.

Marvin not only gave of her time and expertise in those early days, but she also donated to the work of the Service. However, donations in the 1930s might be a little unusual compared with those that are now received. For your information, in 1934, her donation was a bathtub for the Doctor’s Cottage; in 1939, she gave pasture supplies; and, in the early 1940s, she gave three horses, and they were most appropriately named. When I came as a Courier in 1951, however, I could not understand quite what the names meant until I had the pleasure of reading past Quarterly Bulletins, reading Mary Breckinridge’s Wide Neighborhoods, and then getting to know Marvin myself. The horses’ names were Marvin (a big, strapping black mare), Jeff (a very handsome chestnut), and Peru (the Pattersons were then serving in Peru).

From her young Courier and film-making days in the early years of the FNS, Marvin maintained her devotion to our special work even as her life became full of other fascinating activities. Although she began developing a career as a photojournalist and later as a radio broadcaster, Marvin spent the majority of her adult life in the diplomatic corps, serving our country around the world as the wife of a United States Foreign Service officer, Jefferson Patterson. But her love of Kentucky did not wane. In 1955 she became a member of the Frontier Nursing Service Executive Committee, which was then the Governing Board. Since Mr. Patterson was just then appointed Ambassador to Uruguay, Marvin’s role did not begin immediately.

In 1960 Marvin was elected Chairman of the Board of the Frontier Nursing Service, and she organized the very first meeting of the Board of Governors at Wendover. She had returned the
previous year to visit the FNS for the first time in many years. She was, of course, royally entertained and given the double guest room in the Big House. Soon after that visit we all noticed that there was a donation from Marvin for new springs and mattresses for those beds. Also, several years later, there was a new jeep.

Under Marvin's leadership the Frontier Nursing Service launched its first capital fund raising drive to build the Mary Breckinridge Hospital. After five years of chairmanship, Marvin had taken over at the time of Mrs. Breckinridge's death. The government then had moved into health care, even in rural areas. With the advent of Medicare and Medicaid, the whole philosophy of the Frontier Nursing Service was much harder to continue. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare closed down our old cottage hospital because the walls were made of cement, and we could not widen them sufficiently for the handicapped; we could not put in a sprinkler system; and there were other citations. The building of the new Mary Breckinridge Hospital was a necessity, and Marvin gave tremendous leadership. When she completed her sixteen-year tenure as chairman, the Mary Breckinridge Hospital was a reality. It was also the fiftieth anniversary of the FNS.

Since retiring as Chairman of the Board, Marvin has remained a stalwart friend and inspiration to many in Washington. Although not Chairman of the Washington Committee, she is still the bulwark behind many of its ideas. She has shared her many, many friends with those of us who want to expand development for the Frontier Nursing Service. One highlight is that she has been hostess for a very successful benefit for the past few years. Called Derby Day, this is held at her lovely Washington residence on the day of the Kentucky Derby and features beaten biscuits, Kentucky ham, and, of course, mint juleps.

So you can see that Marvin has continued in the Frontier Nursing Service, and she has expanded her interest from the early days, when she made a gift of horses, right down to the more modern days, when she has given a computer. The most exciting gift, however, in which Marvin has played a role, is where she and I together endowed the Mary Breckinridge Chair for Nurse Midwifery. This is the first endowed faculty chair of nurse midwifery in the United States, and, I believe, only the eleventh endowed chair of nursing in the country.

It is what Marvin Breckinridge Patterson has taught us—service to others, attention to detail, always striving to do your very best
regardless of the task—that has made her such a valued member of the Frontier Nursing Service family. She is one of those rare individuals who leads by example, and whose example has led others to important achievements.

RESPONSE
OF
MRS. MARVIN BRECKINRIDGE PATTERSON

Some years ago a book appeared with the title A Room of One's Own. Now this Mary Marvin Breckinridge Patterson Room is not exactly the same thing—as I cannot take it home with me—although, I imagine that I might be allowed to use it here!

I am deeply honored to have this handsome room in this important library named for me. It serves now as a repository for Breckinridge memorabilia, and we expect that within a year or two it will have a cousin—another room, of course—to house more material. While I have the floor, please let me urge relatives and friends to contribute materials to this excellent library, where they will be expertly catalogued and cared for, and made available to scholars and to future generations of the family—even those not born in Kentucky. For a sense of loyalty and affection for this Commonwealth persists. May it go on forever, nourished by this great university.

The Bicentennial of Printing in Kentucky

A large gathering filled the College of Law's Court Room on Sunday, 13 September at 2:00 p.m. for a program, co-sponsored by the Library Associates and the Lexington Herald-Leader, commemorating the bicentennial of the press in Kentucky. John Bradford printed the first newspaper in Kentucky, The Kentucke Gazette, in August of 1787. The tradition of printing in the Commonwealth inaugurated by Bradford influenced the progress of printing in the American west, for the first printer in Ohio (John Maxwell) and the first printer in Missouri (Joseph Charless) worked first in Lexington. James Bradford, John Bradford's son, was the first English language printer in Louisiana. The tradition of the press has prospered in Kentucky, where pioneer printers brought forth their newspapers, early controversialists propagated their ideas in now scarce or perished pamphlets, turfmen promoted their horses with broadsides, soldiers published in captured
Prof. Thomas D. Clark, former Chairman of the Department of History; Mr. Creed C. Black (seated), publisher of the Lexington Herald-Leader; and Prof. David Dick, Acting Director of the School of Journalism, with a portrait of John Bradford, Kentucky’s first printer, at the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the press in Kentucky.
printshops, and celebrated private presses practiced the book arts at the highest levels of typographic design, illustration, and presswork.

Mr. Paul A. Willis, Director of Libraries, welcomed those attending and recognized a number of the descendants of John Bradford, some of whom had traveled from neighboring states to take part in the celebration of Kentucky's early press.

Mr. William J. Marshall, Jr., Assistant Director of Libraries for Special Collections and Archives, introduced the program's first speaker, Dr. Thomas D. Clark, former chairman of the Department of History at the University of Kentucky and author of *The Southern Country Editor*. Dr. Clark spoke on "John Bradford and His Gazette," recounting the circumstances through which Bradford was persuaded by early political leaders to become Kentucky's first printer, the manner in which he secured his equipment, the character of his journalism, and the high esteem in which Bradford was held within the community.

The program's second speaker was Mr. Creed Black, publisher of the Lexington *Herald-Leader*, who was introduced by Mrs. Paula Pope, Executive Secretary of the Library Associates. Mr. Black discussed the development of the press in Kentucky following John Bradford's work in the early nineteenth century. He traced the progress of print journalism in Kentucky to the present day and gave evidence of its continuing vitality. He cited the numbers of weekly and daily newspapers in the Commonwealth that continue to serve as a sounding board and a record of ideas and events in the state.

Prof. David Dick, Acting Director of the School of Journalism at the University of Kentucky, was introduced by Dr. James D. Birchfield, Assistant Director of Libraries for Collection Development. A well-known figure in the field of broadcast journalism from his many years with CBS News, Mr. Dick addressed the transition from printed word to broadcast sound and image. He illustrated the impact of this change for Kentuckians by the use of audio and audio-visual examples, including racetrack reporting, the voice of boxer Mohammed Ali, and the last speech of Vice President Alben Barkley.

Following the formal program, the Associates and their guests moved from the College of Law to the Peal Gallery in King Library—North. Here they viewed an extensive exhibition of Kentucky printing, including the earliest extant example from a
Kentucky press, the second issue of *The Kentucky Gazette*, dated 18 August 1787, lent by the Lexington Public Library. The first novel printed in Kentucky, Jesse Lynch Holman's *The Prisoners of Niagara, or Errors of Education* (Frankfort: William Gerard, 1810), was shown from the collection of Tulane University. An early illustrated broadside, printed by Bradford and entitled "The Matchless History of Joseph and His Brethren," was lent by Transylvania University. "The Gratz Park News," perhaps the earliest remaining work of amateur printers in Kentucky, was lent by Mrs. Peggy Bronston of Lexington. Many other works were on view in the Peal Gallery to show the history of Kentucky's press. Looking on from either end of the gallery were an early portrait of John Bradford by his grandson John V. Bradford, lent by the John Bradford Society and the Junior League of Lexington; and a portrait of the celebrated collector of Kentuckiana, Judge Samuel M. Wilson, first president of the John Bradford Society, whose magnificent library was received by the University of Kentucky with an address by Librarian of Congress Luther Evans forty years ago. An illustrated commemorative pamphlet, *A Kentucky Hundred: Landmarks of Kentucky Printing*, prepared by James Birchfield and William Marshall and printed for the event by the *Herald-Leader*, provided a keepsake of the occasion. A reception was held in the Department of Special Collections, adjacent to the exhibition, where guests enjoyed refreshments and visited among the libraries' friends.

—Paula Leach Pope